



THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

JAMES H. BILLINGTON THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

James Hadley Billington was sworn in as the Librarian of Congress on September 14, 1987. He is the 13th person to hold the position since the Library was established in 1800.

Dr. Billington has championed the Library's "American Memory" National Digital Library (NDL) Program, which makes freely available online more than 10 million American historical items from the collections of the Library and other research institutions on the Library's Web site at www.loc.gov. These unique American Memory materials and the Library's other Internet services, which include THOMAS, a congressional database; the online "card catalog;" exhibitions; information from the U.S. Copyright Office; and a Web site for children and families called "America's Library," handled more than 3.7 billion transactions in fiscal year 2005.

Dr. Billington created the Library's first national private-sector advisory and support group, the James Madison Council. Its members have supported the NDL Program, many other Library outreach programs, and important new acquisitions for the Library's collections. In 2000, the Library's bicentennial year, Madison Council Chairman John W. Kluge made the largest monetary donation in the Library's history: \$60 million to create a center within the Library for advanced scholars and a Nobel-level prize for lifetime achievement in the humanities or social sciences.

In October 2004, Dr. Billington headed a Library of Congress delegation to Tehran, Iran, to re-initiate publications exchanges between the Library of Congress and the National Library of Iran. Dr. Billington was the most senior U.S. government official to openly visit Iran in 25 years.

Born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, on June 1, 1929, Dr. Billington was educated in the public schools of the Philadelphia area. He was class valedictorian at both Lower Merion High School and Princeton University, where he graduated with highest honors in 1950. Three years later, he earned his doctorate from Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar at Balliol College. Following service with the U.S. Army and in the Office of National Estimates, he taught history at Harvard University from 1957 to 1962 and subsequently at Princeton University, where he was a professor of history from 1964 to 1973.

From 1973 to 1987, Dr. Billington was director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the nation's official memorial in Washington to America's 28th president. As director, he founded the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies at the Center and seven other new programs as well as the *Wilson Quarterly*.

Dr. Billington is the author of *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism* (1956); *The Icon and the Axe* (1966); *Fire in the Minds of Men* (1980); *Russia Transformed: Breakthrough to Hope, August 1991* (1992); *The Face of Russia* (1998), a companion book to the three-part television series of the same name, which he wrote and narrated for the Public Broadcasting Service; and *Russia in Search of Itself* (2004). *The Icon and the Axe*, *Fire in the Minds of Men* and *The Face of Russia* have been translated and published in a variety of languages. Dr. Billington has accompanied 10 congressional delegations to Russia and the former Soviet Union. In June 1988 he accompanied President and Mrs. Reagan to the Soviet Summit in Moscow. He is the founder of the Open World Program and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Open World Leadership Center. The Open World Program is a nonpartisan initiative of the U.S. Congress that has brought more than 10,000 emerging young Russian political leaders to communities throughout America, and has launched smaller pilot programs in Ukraine, Lithuania and Uzbekistan.

Dr. Billington has received 36 honorary degrees, as well as the Woodrow Wilson Award from Princeton University (1992), the UCLA Medal (1999), and the Pushkin Medal of the International Association of the Teachers of Russian Language and Culture (2000). He was awarded honorary doctorates from the University of Tbilisi in Georgia (1999), the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow (2001), and the University of Oxford (2002). In October 2005, he was awarded the Hollywood Film Preservation Award from the Hollywood Film Festival.

Dr. Billington is a foreign member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and has been decorated as Chevalier and again as a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters of France, as Commander of the National Order of the Southern Cross of Brazil, awarded the Order of Merit of Italy, and a Knight Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit by the Federal Republic of Germany, awarded the Gwanghwa Medal by the Republic of Korea, and the Chingiz Aitmatov Gold Medal by the Kyrgyz Republic.

Dr. Billington was a longtime member of the editorial advisory boards of *Foreign Affairs* and *Theology Today*, and a member of the Board of Foreign Scholarships (1971-76; Chairman, 1973-1975), which has executive responsibility for academic exchanges worldwide under the Fulbright-Hays Act. He is on the Board of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and is a member of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Dr. Billington is married to the former Marjorie Anne Brennan. They have four children: Dr. Susan Billington Harper, Anne Billington Fischer, the Rev. James Hadley Billington Jr., and Thomas Keator Billington, as well as 12 grandchildren.